

**Lebanon Board of Finance
Minutes of January 8, 2009
Regular Meeting**

Members Present: Liz Charron, Linda Finelli, Gregg LaFontaine, Betsy Petrie, Lori Wesolowski, Chuck Haralson(alt.), Phil Johnson(alt.)

Item A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Liz Charron, Chairman. Chuck Haralson was designated to vote for Glen Coutu until such time as he arrives.

Item B. Minutes of previous meetings

B. Petrie moved to accept the minutes of December 11, 2008 Regular Meeting. Motion seconded by G. LaFontaine. Motion passed with 5 ayes and 1 abstention, L. Wesolowski.

Item C. Correspondence

L. Charron recognized that the board received a copy of a letter from Joyce Okonuk appointing Albert Vertefeuille as the new democratic alternate to the Board of Finance. Correspondence relating to the additional premium for workers compensation and the Farm Building Study and Land Conservation Survey would be taken up under New Business. The Audit Report for the 2007-08 fiscal year would be handed out at the end of the meeting. Discussion and questions on this will be added as an agenda item at next month's meeting.

L. Charron requested that the board take up Item F. New Business at this time.

F. New Business

a. Consider and act on request from Tax Collector, Joyce Hofmann, to incur fees that were not budgeted in order to recover delinquent taxes.

G. Lafontaine made a motion to authorize the overexpenditure of up to \$22,000 from Acct. #407 Tax Collector in order for the Tax Collector to initiate proceedings to address delinquent real estate accounts. L. Finelli seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

(G. Coutu arrived at 7:40 pm)

b. Discuss findings of Farm Building Study with Paula Stahl.

Paula Stahl from Green Valley Institute spoke on the value of farmland preservation and how it would be fiscally beneficial to preserve Lebanon farmland. The study outlined the fiscal impact of a proposed property tax exemption for farm buildings. Members of the farming community and Conservation Commission spoke in support of the exemptions for farm buildings.

C. Haralson questioned whether tree farms were included in the study and would they qualify for exemptions. Tree farms would also qualify for exemptions for buildings. An application process would be involved for the property owner and they must attest that the business and property use is 100 percent farming. The Board of Selectmen will work on a proposal/language for an ordinance to submit to the board.

(A. Vertefeuille arrived at 7:50 pm)

c. Discuss Land Conservation Study with Phil Chester.

Phil Chester reviewed a summary of the Land Conservation Study that was conducted through the UConn Center for Survey Research and funded through a grant from the Dept. of Agriculture. Approximately 400 residents were selected randomly from voter registration lists. The survey found almost all participants are supportive of keeping working farms in Lebanon. The majority also said that farmland and open space preservation should be a focus in town planning and stated that they would be supportive of funding for this.

(resume agenda)

Item D. Monthly Expenditures/Payment of Bills

Three areas of concern at this time are Account 400: Legal Counsel, Account 406: Treasurer, and Account 401: Selectmen. In looking at year to date budget expenses, it was agreed to follow up on these accounts at the February meeting and compare back to January to see if monthly expenditures are reduced. T. Valone will also provide more information on the expenses booked to Insurance prior to next month's meeting.

The final bill from the Auditor was received in the amount of \$6,044.55 which includes an additional \$295.55 of which \$55.55 was for postage and \$240 for copies and putting packets together. L. Wesolowski moved to pay the final bill from the auditor in the amount of \$6,044.55. Motion seconded by G. Lafontaine. Motion passed unanimously.

Item E. Old Business

a. Consider and act on recommendations from the Budget Process Subcommittee.

Copies of the budget calendar were prepared and shared with all members. The Public Hearing is scheduled for April 13th. The Board discussed whether it should be at the high school or fire safety complex. Vote was taken: 3 votes for high school/3 votes for fire safety complex. Vote opened to alternates, resulting in a majority vote to hold the Public Hearing at the high school auditorium. The budget schedule will be formalized and sent out.

b. Consider and act on recommendations from the Banking Relationship Subcommittee.

The Board discussed different options as presented that would lower bank fees on accounts and discussed online banking, remote deposits, and check scanning. Bank of America and The Savings Institute were the two banks that were researched. Both present the best options for the investment of town funds. The capital ratio for both banks was found to be above the requirement for banks holding municipal deposits. There was discussion about the advantages of utilizing both banks for town deposits. Some additional information on pricing will be obtained before taking any action.

c. Consider and act on audit concern about reviewing bank reconciliations.

The Board discussed the need for a process to review reconciliations. In the past, the Town Treasurer performed a review following the reconciliation by the Finance office. T. Valone will

find out if this process can be put back into place. This will be put on the agenda for next month's meeting.

d. Pipe replacement on Lake Shore Road.

First Selectman Joyce Okonuk shared pictures of the Lake Shore Road drainage problem. Water flowing around the existing pipe has caused damage to the properties and to the road. Vehicles cannot pass during times when the road is flooded. A larger pipe is needed under the road to fix the drainage problem. Residents in the area are looking for the town to fix the problem and funding is needed to do this.

F. New Business (cont.)

d. Consider and act on additional premium assessments for workers compensation.

G. Coutu made a motion to transfer \$3,309 from fund balance to Acct. 418 for the payroll audit assessment on workers compensation for the 2006/2007 fiscal year. L. Finelli seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

L. Finelli made a motion to request the Board of Selectmen to hold a special town meeting for the purpose of transferring \$12,504 from fund balance Acct. 418 for the payroll audit assessment on workers compensation for the 2007/2008 fiscal year. G. Coutu seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

e. Consider and act on action we may want to take on budget overruns in the current fiscal year.

No action to be taken at this point.

f. Consider and act on a budget for fiscal year 2009 – 10 for Board of Finance.

G. Coutu made a motion to set the budget for Acct. 405: Board of Finance, fiscal year 2009/2010 for \$2,000. L. Wesolowski seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

g. Consider and act on a budget for fiscal year 2009 – 10 for Town Report.

G. Lafontaine made a motion to set the budget for Acct. 412: Town Report, fiscal year 2009/2010 at \$1,500. L. Finelli seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

G. Coutu made a motion to add Item h. to the agenda to consider and act on a budget for fiscal year 2009-10 for Auditor. L. Wesolowski seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

h. Consider and act on budget for fiscal year 2009-10 for Auditor.

L. Wesolowski made motion to set the budget for Acct. 411: Auditor, fiscal year 2009/2010 at \$11,750. G. Coutu seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

G. Other

L. Charron stated that officers for the Board of Finance need to be elected for the current year. This will be placed on the agenda for next month's meeting.

The Board discussed an email from Donna Lafontaine inviting a representative from the Board of Finance to attend the Board of Education budget meeting. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

L. Charron requested that board members provide her with their alternate selections via email. This should include the order of the alternates to vote in their place.

G. Coutu recommended a rescission of the motion that placed a mil impact for the fire safety complex. The project is finished and no mil increase was realized. The wording of this and reference to it will be brought up for discussion and action at the next meeting.

The Board also discussed the possibility of having two separate votes on the budget referendum: General Town Government/Board of Education. More information is needed to see if this can be done.

H. Adjourn

G. Lafontaine made a motion to adjourn. L. Finelli seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 10:10.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Drake